the user has finished deleting IM conversations and the device returns to UI **500**. The user may delete another conversation by activating its associated delete icon (**1812**). If there is a long list of conversations that fill more than the screen area, the user may scroll through the list using vertically upward and/or vertically downward gestures **708** on the touch screen (**1810**, **1816**).

[0271] This conversation removal process, which requires multiple gestures by the user on different parts of the touch screen (e.g., delete icon **702-4** and confirmation icon **704** are on opposite sides of the touch screen) can reduce the chance that a user accidentally deletes a conversation or other similar item.

[0272] Referring again to FIG. **5**, a user may start a new conversation with another person by activating the message creation icon **514** (e.g., with a finger tap or other gesture). FIG. **19** is a flowchart illustrating a process for displaying a list of contacts from which a user chooses to send an instant message in accordance with some embodiments. After detecting the user selection of the message creation icon (**1902**), the portable electronic device identifies a set of contacts from the user's address book or the equivalent because it does not know to whom this new conversation is directed (**1904**). Next, the portable electronic device displays the identified contacts on the touch screen (**1908**). In some embodiments, the portable electronic device displays multiple icons on the touch screen in addition to the contact list (**1909**), such as the group contacts icon, the first name and last name icons, the alphabet list icons, the cancel icon, and the other number icon. A more detailed description of these icons is provided below in connection with FIGS. **8**A and **8**B. After rendering the contact list and the additional icons, the portable electronic device then monitors the user contact with the touch screen (**1910**).

[0273] FIGS. **8**A & **8**B illustrate an exemplary user interface for a contact list in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, user interfaces **800**A and **800**B include the following elements, or a subset or superset thereof:

[0274] **402**, **404**, **406**, as described above;

[0275] Groups icon **802** that when activated (e.g., by a finger gesture on the icon) initiates display of groups of contacts;

[0276] First name icon **804** that when activated (e.g., by a finger gesture on the icon) initiates an alphabetical display of the user's contacts by their first names (FIG. **8**B);

[0277] Last name icon **806** that when activated (e.g., by a finger gesture on the icon) initiates an alphabetical display of the user's contacts by their last names (FIG. **8**A);

[0278] Alphabet list icons **808** that the user can touch to quickly arrive at a particular first letter in the displayed contact list;

[0279] Cancel icon **810** that when activated (e.g., by a finger gesture on the icon) initiates transfer back to the previous UI (e.g., UI **500**); and

[0280] Other number icon **812** that when activated (e.g., by a finger gesture on the icon) initiates transfer to a UI for entering a phone number for instant messaging, such as a phone number that is not in the user's contact list (e.g., UI **900**, FIG. **9**).

[0281] As described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/322,547, "Scrolling List With Floating Adjacent Index Symbols," filed Dec. 23, 2005, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety, the user may scroll through the contact list using vertically upward and/or vertically downward gestures **814** on the touch screen.

[0282] If the next user contact is such a scrolling gesture **814** (**1912**) or a finger gesture on one of the first name icon **804**, the second name icon **806** and the alphabet list icons **808** (**1914**), the portable electronic device modifies the contacts currently on display (**1920**). Although the contact list may be shared by multiple applications on the same portable device (e.g., email, phone, and instant messaging), a user selection of a name in the contact list in this context will be used for IM service because the contact list was requested from within the IM application. Here the contact list is being shown in connection with user activation of the message creation icon **514** in the IM application **141**.

[0283] If the portable electronic device detects a finger gesture on one person's name or other identifier in the contact list (**1916**), the portable electronic device displays a message compose region for a message to the selected contact (**1108**, FIG. **11**) and displays a conversation UI as shown in FIG. **6**A. In some embodiments, if there is an existing conversation between the user and the selected person, the portable electronic device merges the new conversation into the existing one by displaying messages associated with the existing conversation.

[0284] If the portable electronic device detects a user gesture on the cancel icon **810** (**1918**), the portable electronic device aborts the process of creating the new conversation and brings back the conversation list shown in FIG. **5** (**1006**, FIG. **10**).

[0285] If the portable electronic device detects a finger gesture on the other number icon **812** (**1919**), typically a new conversation with a person not in the contact list is initiated. Accordingly, the portable electronic device may render a new user interface for the user to enter the person's contact information that is going to be used by the new conversation.

[0286] FIG. **20** is a flowchart illustrating a process for launching a new conversation using a new phone number in accordance with some embodiments. Upon detecting user selection of the other number icon (**2002**), the portable electronic device provides a contact information display region (**2004**) and a contact information compose region (**2006**) on the touch screen. The contact information may be a phone number or an email address for IM service. The contact information display region includes a text box **906** for displaying the user-entered contact information. The contact information compose region includes a keyboard **624** for the user to enter such contact information. If the user activates the cancel icon (**2012**), the portable electronic device aborts the process of creating a new conversation and returns to the conversation list UI shown in FIG. **5**. If the user input is a letter or number (**2010**), the portable electronic device displays it in the text box (**2014**).

[0287] FIG. **9** illustrates an exemplary user interface for entering a phone number for instant messaging in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, user interface **900** includes the following elements, or a subset or superset thereof:

[0288] **402**, **404**, **406**, **602**, and **624**, as described above;

[0289] Cancel icon **902** that when activated (e.g., by a finger gesture on the icon) initiates transfer back to the previous UI (e.g., UI **800**A or UI **800**B);